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## Morrison gets OK for hygiene center

*A majority of the city council favors putting the center at Third and Yesler.*

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Despite objections from Pioneer Square leaders, a Seattle City Council committee on Tuesday voted to locate a homeless service center in The Morrison hotel at Third and Yesler.

The plan, if approved by the council Feb. 28, calls for a \$2.1 million, 8,600-square-foot center to be operated by the Downtown Emergency Service Center, which is located in The Morrison.

In a 4-2 vote, the committee rejected Mayor Greg Nickels' proposal to put the center at Fourth and Yesler, adjacent to the planned Fire Station 10 and Emergency Operations Center.

Tom Rasmussen, chair of the Housing, Human Services & Health Committee, said the Fourth and Yesler site is too small to provide a full range of services, and said pedestrian traffic into the center could interfere with the fire station.

Council members agreed The Morrison site could give the center more space for about \$1 million less than the mayor's recommended site.

The non-profit DESC offers housing for disabled and homeless adults, as well as clinical services. The center would offer counseling, job training and health screenings as well as hygiene, chemical dependency and mental health services.

Council members acknowledged the center will be unwanted in any neighborhood. "I regret that these choices have a tendency to pit one

community against another," said Peter Steinbrueck. "It's a difficult choice for any community."

Before the committee voted, community members lined up to voice their objections.

Ted Choi of the Seattle Chinese/Chinatown Chamber of Commerce spoke against the Fourth and Yesler site, saying it "creates unwelcomed potential circumstances." Choi said the council should consider placing the center in the unbuilt Belltown Neighborhood Center.

Adam Hasson of Samis Land Co., which owns the Smith Tower at Second and Yesler, said the city should not approve The Morrison site. "We need to bring a healthy retail environment back to the area."

Craig Montgomery, executive director of Pioneer Square Community Center, said the Morrison site would break the city's commitment in the 1998 neighborhood plan not to add more social services in that area until crime is reduced. "Public safety issues of this critical area must be first addressed."

But Bill Hobson, executive director of DESC, said the new center would represent a resumption — not an addition — of services interrupted by recent renovations to The Morrison.

Rasmussen said the \$1 million saved by placing the center at The Morrison could be used for neighborhood improvements.

Steinbrueck said the center would not increase the homeless population in Pioneer Square. "This will be a decent, civilized place for people to clean themselves and their clothes, and get support services," he said. "Isn't that better than people lounging around in parks and making others feel uncomfortable?"

Richard Conlin said the center "may be part of creating a solution" to homelessness downtown.